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Annex II

Major Military Targets North of the 20th Parallel

There are four major airfields in North Vietnam which normally accommodate military aircraft (MIG fighters and IL-28 bombers) as well as transports for military and civilian use. Effective neutralizations of these facilities and aircraft would temporarily cripple the North Vietnamese tactical and transport air capability, as well as their ability to strike with at airpower/targets in South Vietnam. Replacements could be provided by the USSR and/or Communist China; after airfield repair, a fighter defense and bomber offense could be reconstituted quickly. However, the neutralization of this military equipment so recently supplied by the USSR and China, (particularly if accompanied by strikes at the SAM sites around Hanoi) would serve to indicate US determination to press on with moderate escalation. The neutralization of air power and surface-to-air missiles would also make easier the task of successfully attacking North Vietnamese industry, which is centered in the Hanoi-Haiphong area, if such a course of action were selected. (See Table 1).

The loss of the Haiphong and Bai Chay naval bases would be of lesser military significance, partially because the naval role in support of the North Vietnamese Army (PAVN) is not large, and partially because the naval bases have no symbolic significance.

Because the major North Vietnamese military effort is being carried out in South Vietnam by ground forces that are largely independent and self -

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reliant, bombing of military facilities in North Vietnam is not likely to have an immediate impact on the capability of the ground forces in South Vietnam to continue the war. It is believed that conventional bombing of purely military facilities in North Vietnam -- even to the destruction of their major air facilities -- would not diminish the logistic support of the PAVN because its requirements are small and losses could be replaced for a short period of time at least, from dispersed depots. Over the longer run, replacements could be brought in from Communist China.

Neutralization of the key military facilities in North Vietnam listed in Table 1 would have two predictable effects: (1) It would serve notice on the Hanoi regime of US determination to attack military targets anywhere in North Vietnam, and (2) It would reduce US and South Vietnamese aircraft losses if follow-up attacks on key industrial or transport targets were planned and executed prior to the reactivation of the neutralized military facilities because most of these industrial and transport targets are also located in the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

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